# DIVINE WISDOM

AND

# PROVIDENCE;

AN

# ESSAY.

Occaſion'd by the

*ESSAY on MAN.*

---

*Amicus* Plato, *Amicus* Socrates, *ſed magis Amica VERITAS.*

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The Second EDITION, Corrected.

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By Mr. *BRIDGES.*

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*LONDON:*

*Printed by* J. HUGGONSON, *and ſold by* J. ROBERTS,
*at the* Oxford Arms *in* Warwick-lane.

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# THE PREFACE.

*THIS Poem was only deſigned at the firſt, to be an Anſwer to a Syſtem of Mr.* POPE's *in his celebrated* Eſſay on Man; *in which that moſt ingenious and admirable Poet ſuppoſes the preſent States of the natural and moral World, to be as perfect as their Creator* originally *deſigned them, and their Relation to the general Order of the Univerſe would admit. It was my Opinion not only that the Atheiſt might be more reaſonably argued with on the contrary Hypotheſis; but that the Deiſt might be brought by this Means to a better Notiou of revealed Religion; which is entirely built on a Suppoſition of the Degeneracy and Corruption of Man, and gives us the moſt rational Account of the Irregularities and Diſorders of Nature, conſequent upon that Degeneracy and Corruption.*

*The Diſorders of Nature and the preſent unhappy Condition of Man have been long urged as Arguments that a good and perfect Being could not be the Author of either.*

Quod ſi jam rerum ignorem Primordia quæ ſint,
Hoc tamen ex ipſis Cæli rationibus auſim
Confirmare, aliisque ex rebus reddere multis,
Nequaquam nobis Divinitus eſſe paratam
Naturam rerum, tanta ſtat prædita Culpa.

*The ſame Poet, after having produced ſome particular Inſtances to confirm this Aſſertion, takes Notice of the unhappy Circumſtances of Man at his Birth, and obſerves that his crying when he comes into the World is a fit Preſage of the many Evils he is to ſuffer in it.*

Tum porro Puer, ut ſævis projectus ab undis
Navita, nudus humi jacet infans, indigus omni
Vitali Auxilio, cum primum in luminis Oras
Nixibus ex alvo matris Natura profudit,
Vagituque locum lugubri complet, ut æquum eſt,
Cui tantum in vita reſtat tranſire malorum.

*Mr.*

*Mr.* POPE, *to take off the Force of these and the like Arguments lays down this Principle, as the general Foundation of his reasoning, that God, when he intended to make the Universe was guided by his infinite Wisdom to form the best (or wisest) System that was possible; that in such a System there must necessarily be a Fulness or Coherence, or regular Gradations and Subordinations of Things to one another, from the highest to the lowest; and that in Consequence of such a Fulness, and such Gradations, it was necessary there should be such a Creature as Man.*

*It would not be very difficult, if it was necessary, to shew the Precariousness, at least, of this Principle of Mr.* POPE's, *if he had only the* Imperfections, *and not the* Evils *of our Beings to account for. But how will it follow, from infinite Wisdom forming the best (or wisest) System, that Evil should any where, or in any Degree, be admitted into such a System? It is no true Wisdom in Man to be the Author and Contriver of what is bad, much less is it such in God, the adorable Fouutain of all Good, aud all Perfection.*

*If Evils proceeded from the original Intention and Appointment of the Deity, they must either argue a Defect of* Goodness, *or of* Wisdom *in him. If it was in his Power, so to have contrived the System of the World, as to have prevented those Evils; his* not *preventing them argues a Defect of his* Goodness: *If he could not have made Things without these Imperfections and Disorders, his* thus *making them argues a Defect of his Wisdom. But will any one say, or can any one reasonably think, that, in God, there is the least Defect of either of these Perfections?*

*To say that* partial Evil is universal Good; *or, with my Ld.* S——y, *that nothing is* absolutely *ill, if it is* any where *good in* any other, *or in the* universal *System is saying nothing to the Disproof of the real Existence of Evil. Evil is still Evil, tho' it be made conducive to the general Good of the* whole, *and tho' few, in respect of the whole, be Sufferers by it. It is true God can bring Good out of* Evil, *but he cannot be said to be the Cause of Evil for the Sake of Good. It is one Thing to say, that God can produce Good out of the Evil he has* permitted, *and another to say, he was the Cause of Evil, in order to make it subservient to a greater Good, which he could not effect without it.*

*It would be much more for the Honour of the divine Perfections to suppose, that his Works, when they first came out of his Hands, were much more pure aud perfect, than we now see them; and if we can find any Cause of their Depravation, it would surely inspire us with more amiable Ideas of our great and good Creator to think that Order, Beauty and Happiness proceeded from him; and that Disorder, Deformity and Evil are derived from another Source: Not from any evil Principle, as some have thought, counterworking the Designs of a good Principle, but from the Abuse of moral Liberty in the Creatures, which was the Occasion both of their own personal Disorders, and the Disorders observable in the present Frame and Constitution of Nature.*

*But tho' there are many Disorders in the natural World, it is far from being so disordered as not very plainly to appear the Work of an intelligent and wise Being. There are still infinite Beauties in it to engage our Admiration of its great Author. The humane Body is a System of Matter, formed with admirable Art and Contrivance; and yet to how many Diseases and Disorders is it obnoxious! But do we conclude from these Diseases and Disorders, that there is no Art and Contrivance in the Formation and Structure of it? Apply but this Observation to Nature, and you will no more be offended with her Irregularities, than with the Diseases of your own Bodies. You will draw no other Conclusion from one than*

*the*

*the other, but will find Matter enough, for Wonder in both to make you reverence and adore that Being, who in great Wisdom has made all Things; many inconteſtable Evidences of which are ſtill viſible amidſt all the Deformities and Diſorders occaſioned by Sin.*

*But it may be queſtioned, that, if there is the Appearance of ſo much Evil in the World, how come we to know that the Maker of the World was not the immediate Cauſe of all the Evil that is in it? The Anſwer to which is this; That we know it from a due Conſideration of the preſent State of our own Minds; the Impreſſions that are ſtill left there, concerning Goodneſs, Juſtice, and other moral Excellencies, giving us a very juſt Notion of the divine Perfections, and being a convincing and ſtrong Evidence, that there are ſuch Perfections in the divine Nature. Beſides, the Concluſion drawn from the Weakneſs of our Reaſon, and the Strength and Prevalency of our Paſſions, that we are in a diſordered, lapſed Condition, being juſt and rational in itſelf, as well as aſſented to by many of the greateſt Heathen Philoſophers, it is very obvious to infer that all the Evils and Diſorders of the natural World can be no other than the Conſequences of the Depravity and Corruption of the moral.*

*I am far from charging Mr.* POPE *with writing with any Deſign againſt Chriſtianity; but if he builds upon ſuch Principles as appear to others entirely deſtructive of the Foundation of the Chriſtian Syſtem, he muſt excuſe them if they ſhew their Diſlike of ſuch Principles, and endeavour that ſuch Writings as his may not be made an ill Uſe of, to the Prejudice of that Religion, for which they have the moſt awful Regard and Veneration. Had another Writer of leſs Reputation and Influence in the World, advanced the ſame Notions it would have been leſs material to have taken any Notice of him; but Mr.* POPE *is too conſiderable to be neglected in ſuch a Caſe; as he is the firſt Man one would deſire to have engaged in a good Cauſe, and the laſt one would chuſe to maintain a bad one. I am perſuaded, that in what I oppoſe him, his Intention was truely commendable, and that he thought it for the Honour of God to vindicate his Proceedings in the Manner he has done. I deſire no more than that he will think as candidly of this Oppoſition; and as for the Reaſonableneſs of either his Hypotheſis or mine, that muſt be left to our Readers, to whom I ſhould be glad to be able to give the ſame Poetical Eatertainment that he has done; but I am ſo far from pretending any Competition with him this Way, that I profeſs myſelf to be in the firſt Rank of his Admirers, and inſtead of expecting the Reader to approve the following Poem, I ſhall eſteem it a ſufficient Favour from him, if he will be ſo indulgent as to excuſe its many Imperfections.*

*The Scheme of Fitneſs has ſo near a Relation to Mr.* POPE'S *Hypotheſis, that I have thought it proper to conſider them both together. They both agree in this, that every Thing is now in its firſt intended State of Fitneſs; but in this I conceive they differ, in not ſuppoſing the ſame Original of Fitneſs. Mr.* POPE *ſeems to have no Notion of abſtract Reaſons and Natures of Things, which ſome late Writers of different Deſigns and Principles have been ſo fond of. On this Scheme, which has juſt as much Modeſty as Philoſophy in it, Things are ſuppoſed to be eternally fit or unfit, reaſonable or unreaſonable, independent not only on the Will, but even the Being of God. I ſhall give but one Inſtance, that I may not be too tedious, ont of numberleſs that might be produced what a bad Uſe has been made of this ſtrange Notion, to ſhew that a divine Revelation is abſolutely needleſs.* "*If it is the Reaſon, ſays one, or the Fitneſs of the Thing, that makes it a divine Law, then they who never heard of any external Revelation and know from the Nature of Things what is fit for them to do, know all that God will or* "*can require of them.*" *Having obſerved thus much of this Scheme to the Reader, I ſhall refer him to the Poem ond Notes, to ſee what I have advanced againſt it.*

DIVINE

# DIVINE WISDOM
AND
# PROVIDENCE.

E'ER Time first mov'd, or e'er the youthful Sun
His radiant Journey first rejoic'd to run;
E'er starry Lights flam'd round each glowing Pole,
Or e'er the circling Years began to roll;
All-glorious on his bright eternal Throne
*Great Being Increate*, the *Godhead* shone;
With boundless and essential Glories bright;
Original of Day, and Fount of Light;
Alone sufficient, and his Bliss compleat,
For Diminution or Increase too great:
When mov'd by *Goodness* only he creates;
At his Command obedient Nature waits:

Creation's wide extended Scenes ariſe,
Suns blaze and Planets roll in ambient Skies.
His Works their glorious Maker All declare,
Anſwering his great Idea, Good and Fair;
Thro' All, expreſſive of his Great Deſign,
The Charms of Order and Perfection ſhine.
With loud Acclaim the Heavens reſounding ring,
While Choirs of rapt and wondring Angels ſing;
Angels, with pure Celeſtial Radiance bright,
Beholding GOD, and walking in his Light.

Say, ye Great Pow'rs, and Miniſters above!
Who ſhine in Knowledge, as ye burn with Love;
Who ſing, inceſſant, the ſtupendous Theme;
Say, dwells not Wiſdom with Th' Immenſe Supreme?
Say, is th' Eternal and Omniſcient GOD,
Its bleſſed Fountain, and its bright Abode?
Or was he *taught* his Knowledge, *ſhown* the Way
Whence Underſtanding gave its beamy Day?

Know then, of GOD, ye Sons of mortal Pride!
His Nature is his Law, his Will his Guide.
He, by his own *eſſential* Wiſdom wiſe,
Stretcht out the Heav'ns, and blaz'd th' Expanſe of Skies.

From

From this eternal Source, this boundleſs Cauſe,
Dependent Nature its Exiſtence draws,
Its Order, Harmony, and all its Laws.
Here has eternal Wiſdom always ſhone;
* Its Glories underiv'd, its Rays its own;
Nothing *extrinſical* exciting Thought,
Or ſhowing GOD the great Creation's Draught;
*Himſelf* this univerſal Frame deſign'd;
Its great Exemplar in his perfect Mind;
Whoſe Charms let *Heathen Piety* declare;
† A *Sea of Beauty*, this eternal Fair.

Go wiſer thou! and form thy daring Scheme,
Nor tremble to dethrone the World's *Supreme*;
Go, thy *ſuperior* Principle explore,
Teach GOD to know, and guide creating Pow'r;
A Subject be the World's great Sov'reign made,
By *abſtract*, *antecedent* Reaſons ſway'd:
No more the *firſt*, *ſupreme obliging* Cauſe,
But now by *Fitneſs* govern'd and its Laws.
Go, and ſuppoſe no GOD; and then maintain,
That moral Good and Beauty ſtill remain:

That

* *Dum luces, lux ipſa quidem es,*
*——— Dum ſapis, ipſa adeo Sapientia tecum eſt,*
*Ut nuſquam queat ab ſeſe divellier ipſa. Vida.*
† Πέλαγος τῦ καλῦ. PLUT.

That *Fitneſs*, ſtill enthron'd, exerts her Sway,
And bids the ſubject moral World obey:
Preſcribes the reas'ning Mind its certain Courſe;
No GOD t'injoin, or Sanctions to enforce.

Let juſter Thoughts the humble Soul inſpire,
Devotion teach it, as its Raptures fire.
From GOD, its ſacred Source, let *Fitneſs* ſtream,
As from the ſolar Orb the lucid Beam.
How vain, to think that GOD can be away,
Yet Things dependent on his Being ſtay!
With *Him* let univerſal Nature die,
Or like a Shadow with its Subſtance fly.
Not act one Moment his *ſuſtaining* Pow'r;
And Worlds are vaniſh'd, and ſubſiſt no more.
Not ſhine this Sun of intellectual Light;
And all is dark and unperceiving Night.
*Reaſon*, in leſſer or in greater Fires,
In Man, or Angel, inſtantly expires.

Where now thoſe empty Phantoms ſhall we find,
Thoſe vain Abſtractions of your giddy Mind;
*Reaſons*, *Relations*, or whate'er their Names,
Ideal Shades, and philoſophic Dreams?

" Eternal

" Eternal Truths exiſt in God alone;
" And *there* have all your *Reaſons* always ſhone."
While vulgar Minds no farther dare aſpire,
Fearleſs you wing your tow'ring Genius higher;
For Knowledge, e'en beyond Omniſcience ſtray,
And ſoar for Light above the Source of Day.

" But whence his *Objects* has th' *Eternal Knower*?
His Mind's great Object is his boundleſs Power.*
Yet not from Power, but from his † Goodneſs ſprings,
Whate'er is good, and right, and fit in Things.

C " † Ad-

* The Notion of *eternal, abſtract Reaſons* and *Relations* of Things, is grounded on the Suppoſition of an *external, independent* Principle, being the neceſſary *objective* Cauſe of the Divine Knowledge. The following Words, from a very great and learned Writer, are, certainly a much more rational and intelligible Account of this Matter. " But what Account, ſays he, can we poſſibly give of Knowledge and Under-" ſtanding, their Nature and Original, ſince there muſt be νοητὸν, that which is intelligible, in Order of Nature, before νόησις, or Intellection? Certainly no other than this " that the firſt original Knowledge is that of a *Perfect Being*, infinitely *good* and *powerful*, comprehending itſelf, and the utmoſt Extent of its own *Fecundity* and *Power*, " that is, the *Poſſibilities* of all Things; their *Ideas*, with their ſeveral Relations to " one another; all neceſſary and immutable Truths. Here therefore is there a *Knowledge before* the *World*, and all *ſenſible Things*, that was *archetypal* and *paradigmatical* " to the ſame." Which laſt Words are an Anſwer to thoſe Queſtions of *Lucretius*,

*Exemplum porro gignundis Rebus, et ipſa*
*Notities Hominum, Divis unde inſita primùm?*
*Quid vellent facere ut ſcirent, animoque viderent?*
*Quove modo'ſt unquam*, &c.

† As there is Goodneſs in God, there is an unalterable Fitneſs in Things, as unalterable as his Goodneſs, which is eſſential to him: But, without Goodneſs in God, there could be no Fitneſs; his Goodneſs, or (which is the ſame in the more general Senſe of the Word) the eſſential Rectitude of his Nature, being the Ground and Foundation of all that is *Good* and *Right* in Things; for as Things have their *eternal* and *immutable Relations* from his *Power* and *Wiſdom*, ſo they have their *eternal* and *immutable Reaſons* and *Fitneſſes* from his *Rectitude* and *Goodneſs*. We may as well maintain, that there may be corporeal Qualities without corporeal Subſtance, as *eternal Reaſons of Things*, without an *eternal reaſonable* Being; and may as juſtly argue, that corporeal Qualities are *antece-*

" † Admit that Fitneſs flows from GOD; 'tis clear
" That ſtill this Fitneſs muſt to Man appear;
" On ev'ry Object of his Faith muſt ſhine
" Strongly impreſs'd its Characters divine;
" Be Fitneſs ſtill the bright Criterion giv'n,
" To judge 'twixt human Dreams and Truths from Heav'n;
" All ſenſeleſs Superſtitions to explode
" *Credulity* reveres as Laws of God."

That Fitneſs then explore; why God creates
So *variouſly?* why ſuch peculiar States
He has aſſign'd to *Angels*, *Brutes* and *Men?*
Above ſo high, and here ſo low the Scene!
Why ſuch unequal Gifts his Creatures ſhare;
There ſo profuſe his Hand, ſo ſparing here?

* Re-

*dent* in Order of Nature to corporeal Subſtance, as that the *eternal Reaſons of Things* are *antecedent* in Order of Nature to an *eternal, reaſonable Being*. *Plotinus*, to the Reproach of our preſent Infidel Philoſophers, has a remarkable Paſſage, ſhewing that God acts *according* to his *own Nature*, that *Beauty* (or *Fitneſs*) and *Juſtice* (τὸ καλὸν ἢ τὸ δίκαιον) flow from it, and that if theſe Things are not *there*, they are *no where*. Ποιεῖ τὸ θεῖον ὡς πέφυκε, πέφυκε δὲ κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸ εἶναι, ἢ τὸ καλὸν ἐν τοῖς ἐνεργείαις αὖ τὸ δίκαιον συνεπέφευε, εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἐκεῖ ταῦτα, πῦ ἂν εἴη;

† It is here objected, that whether Fitneſs proceeds from God, or from the abſtract Nature of Things, it muſt, if we would aſſent rationally, appear always inſcribed on every Thing, to which our Aſſent is required to be given. This Demand is ſhewn to be unreaſonable with regard to *Revelation*; becauſe the Appearance of ſuch a Fitneſs is wanting in many Inſtances in Creation and Providence. It is true, there muſt appear a Reaſon *why* we believe a Thing; but ſeeing a general Reaſon, why we believe, is not ſeeing the particular Fitneſs of the Thing believed. If I have ſufficient Evidence for my Belief of the Juſtice, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs of God, I have no Occaſion to have theſe Perfections diſcovered to me in every particular Object of my Belief. For I am rationally certain in this caſe that all Things *muſt* be right and fit, which proceed from God; though I cannot always ſee particularly, upon what Account many Things are ſo.

* Reply not, " all is right, if Heav'n but grant,
" What each *Capacity* and *Nature* want;"
That *higher* Fitneſs now is our Demand,
Which guided firſt the great all-forming Hand;
Whence all *Capacities* of Beings flow'd,
And whence ſuch *diff'rent Natures* were beſtow'd;
More diff'rent than the Fountains bubbling Store,
And the wide Sea that rolls from Shore to Shore;
Than Hills that o'er the Vales juſt peeping riſe,
And lofty Mountains that invade the Skies;
Than ſtagnant Waters, and impetuous Streams;
The dubious Morning, and the Noon-day Beams.
'Tis not enough, that Beings ſmall and great,
Enjoy the Bliſs proportion'd to their State;
'Tis not enough that *Providence* you draw,
Within the Sphere of your abſtracted Law;
O'er the *firſt* Schemes of Heav'n it muſt preſide;
To Pow'r *creative* a controlling Guide.
" The ſmalleſt Veſſels need not run o'er;"
'Tis true; but why deſign'd to hold no more?

The

* To the Queſtion, Why all Creatures were not made equal, or had not the ſame Advantages at their firſt Creation? It was a very poor Anſwer of the Author of a famous infidel Book, to ſay, that " Infinite Variety of Creatures is neceſſary to ſhew the " great Extent of the divine Goodneſs; ——— and that from thence it did not follow, " but that God would, either here or hereafter, beſtow on the rational Creation all " the Happineſs their *Nature* is capable of." The Reply to which, as far as *Fitneſs* is concerned in it, is here given in the Poetry.

The middle Rank why Man poſſeſſes, ſhow;
Angels above him, and the Brutes below.
The Seraph, why indulg'd ſo bright a Day;
So ſtrong his Luſtre, and ſo weak our Ray:
Thro' Scenes of Truth his Views immediate paſs;
Whilſt we but ſee them darkly thro' a Glaſs:
His Knowledge more extenſive, as more clear;
Our's how contracted in its cloudy Sphere!

Why lower ſtill than Man are *Brutes* depreſs'd?
Why Reaſon's Flame not kindled in their Breaſt?
Nature they view with unobſerving Eye;
Nor Nature's Lord in Nature's Works can ſpy.
Low Inſtinct only guides and gives them Laws;
A Principle, unconſcious of its Cauſe:
The Glories of the bright refulgent Sky,
Which thouſand thouſand radiant Fires ſupply;
Not the leaſt Thought to brutal Minds convey,
Of that tranſcendent Greatneſs they diſplay.
So much *our* Wonder, fair Ætherial Scene!
To *them* what Worlds unnumber'd ſhine in vain.

Sound now this wond'rous Depth of Providence,
Of Man but bleſs'd with Reaſon, Brutes with Senſe;

Of

Of Angels, in the Scale of Science high,
And near in Converſe with the *Deity*.
Gradations hard for *Fitneſs* to explain;
Eluſive of thy Scheme, preſumptuous Man!

* *Good*, not *Variety*, is Heav'ns great End;
But Good thus *varying* who can comprehend?
Thy Wiſdom, moſt *adorable Supreme!*
Expreſſive of thy Goodneſs, form'd that Scheme;
Which in thy great Deſign of Goodneſs wrought,
Is more with Wiſdom, as with Goodneſs fraught.

Say whence, if thus perplex'd with varying Good,
So foul and large a Stream of Ills has flow'd?



* Goodneſs being the principal and ſovereign Perfection of the Deity, which firſt determined him to create the World; and his Wiſdom being conſequently regulated by his Goodneſs, and not his Goodneſs by his Wiſdom, it is very difficult, upon the Scheme of *Deiſm* eſpecially, to account for all the Variety, and different Meaſures and Proportions of Good, diſtributed to his Creatures.

" It was the Opinion of the wiſeſt Philoſophers, That there is in the Scale of Being " a Nature of *Goodneſs* ſuperior to *Wiſdom*, which therefore meaſures and determines " the *Wiſdom* of God, *&c.*" Cudw. *Etern. and Imm. Mor.*

It is not here pretended, that it is abſolutely unfit for the Deity to create what Variety of Beings he pleaſes; far be it from any one to preſume to preſcribe to the divine Goodneſs! The Intention of the Argument here, is only to ſhew thoſe, who will not believe a Thing to be from God, whoſe Fitneſs does not appear to them; that, upon this Principle, they muſt deny the Creation itſelf to be his Work: Since that Variety of Creatures which there is in the Creation, has no Appearance in it of Fitneſs, that we can find, conſiſtent with the Notion of Goodneſs, being the principal Motive of God's creating the World: A greater Variety of Creatures, ſhewing rather a greater Extent of the Wiſdom than of the Goodneſs of God, and conſequently making Wiſdom more principally concerned than Goodneſs.

Or whence did ſuch a dire contagious Blaſt
This once fair Syſtem of Creation waſte?
Say, whence are *both* diſorder'd, but by Sin;
The World *without* us, and the Mind *within*?
And whence this Heav'n born and immortal Mind
To ſo impure and frail a Body join'd?
In vain to Fitneſs tries our baffled Skill
To bring theſe great Phænomena of Ill.
On Fitneſs Scheme our Labour ever vain!
To vindicate theſe Ways of God to Man!

Evils, tho' *partial*, *Evils* ſtill conclude;
Nor think them loſt in *univerſal Good*.
From GOD no Evil or Diſorder ſprings;
But Beauty, Good, and Harmony in Things.
‖ No Urn of Ill fictitious, near him ſtands;
But Bliſs flows pure from his *creating* Hands:
*Parts* with the *Whole*, his Good deſign'd to ſhare;
Nothing exempted from his equal Care.
But ſay from Him, its Author, Evil came,
You blame his *Goodneſs*, or his *Wiſdom* blame.

Search

‖ Δοιοὶ γάρ τε πίθοι κατακείαται ἐν Διὸς οὐδει
Δώρων, οἷα δίδωσι, κακῶν ἕτερος δὲ, ἑάων. HOM. Il. ω.

Search your own Mind, you need not farther go,
And from Impreſſions there his Nature know:
This ſullied Mirror, ſtill reflecting Light,
To ſhow you, all from Him is good and right.
Thus when ſome ſacred mouldring Dome we ſpy,
Which ſtrikes our pitying Heart, and wond'ring Eye;
And in its broken ſad Remains declares
Declining Piety, and waſting Years;
Tho' there, no more, aſcending Praiſes join,
We ſtill revere th' important great Deſign.

If Juſtice, Mercy, Goodneſs, are allow'd
In Man Perfections, think from whom they flow'd.
In human Minds what e'er Perfections ſhine,
Are Emanations from the Mind divine.
And if in Man ſo beauteous, ſtill, their Rays;
In GOD how glorious is their boundleſs Blaze!

How chang'd is Nature from her blooming Years!
What Marks of Vengeance on her Looks ſhe wears!
Not always now the ſame her vernant Mien;
The Skies not always healthful and ſerene;
Calm, peaceful Regions, pleaſing to the Sight;
And ever ſmiling with diffuſive Light!

Now

Now noxious Vapours from the Earth exhale,
Stagnate the Air, and taint the purer Gale.
Now the thick Clouds with gloomy Looks arise,
Banish the Day, and blacken all the Skies:
Revolving Seasons vary Nature's Face;
And wintry Horrors rifle ev'ry Grace.
The blustering Winds with adverse Fury roar,
At once confounding Skies, and Seas and Shore;
While swept away by Tempests, Nations sleep
In the wide Bosom of the boundless Deep.
Now roll loud Thunders thro' the troubled Air,
And the red Lightnings give an instant Glare.
Now the pent Vapours, struggling into Birth,
Burst from their Caverns, thro' th' incumbent Earth;
While trembling Cities, thro' the gaping Wound,
Sink, on a sudden, down the dread Profound.
Now burning Mountains roll their Clouds on high,
Of smoky Fires, which from their Entrails fly!
O'er the *Sicilian* Fields impetuous come
The flaming Storms from thund'ring *Ætna*'s Womb;
A sweeping fiery Deluge all around
With Rage resistless wastes the fruitful Ground.
Now Famines stalk the Earth with gastly Eyes,
And Plagues range furious thro' infectious Skies.

Are

Are theſe the Scenes of Beauty and Delight,
Which *once* their Maker ſaw were Good and Right?
From an *All-perfect* Good did theſe proceed?
The Seats of bliſsful Innocence decreed?
Did *theſe* at firſt *Heav'ns* bounteous Hands employ;
Great Source of Order, Beauty, Peace and Joy?
Oh! ſay not this; ſay, Nature *Man* bemoans,
And for Man's Guilt with great Diſorders groans.

*BOTH* are diſorder'd, 'tis, alas! too plain,
The World of *Nature*, and the World of *Man*.
How diſcompos'd the human Frame we find!
How frail the Body, how confus'd the Mind!
That ſubject to Diſeaſes, this to Strife;
Conſpiring both to torture human Life.

With various, reſtleſs Paſſions are we toſs'd;
Mad with Deſires, with Diſappointments croſs'd;
Tir'd with enjoying, eager to enjoy,
From Objects vainly we to Objects fly.
While, loſt for purer Bliſs our Taſte at firſt,
Falſe Joys we ſeek, and burn with ſenſual Thirſt:
Sigh for thoſe Vanities, which meanly pleaſe;
Which ne'er can cure, but nouriſh the Diſeaſe.

Reaſon, poor Light, once glorious in its Sway,
Now faintly ſhines, and ſheds a feeble Ray;
Too weak in its Dominion to controul
Contending Paſſions which tempeſt the Soul.

Thus when impetuous Winds the Ocean ſweep,
And all their Fury ſhakes th' indignant Deep;
When Waves on Waves in dread Commotions riſe,
And War amidſt the dark and angry Skies;
The regent Sun, the radiant Lord of Day
Looks on unable to compoſe the Fray.

Such is the State of ev'ry human Breaſt!
The Mind of Man, a Sea that cannot reſt.
From Minds diſorder'd thus what Ills have roſe?
The greateſt that diſturb Mankind's Repoſe.
Hence all thoſe agonizing Pains they feel,
Whom Perſecution breaks upon her Wheel,
Zealous for Heav'n with an infernal Zeal;
Furious to haſte the Pangs of cruel Death,
And watchful to retard th' expiring Breath.
Hence Deſolation and Deſtruction wait
The mad Ambition of the Proud and Great.

Before

Before their Hosts the fruitful Vales how fair!
Behind what wide extended Wastes appear!
And oh! what Streams of Blood, what Heaps of Slain,
When Wars are thundering o'er the hostile Plain.

As soon as e'er we draw our natal Breath,
Say, is it Life begins, or is it Death?
Our Life at best is but a slow Disease,
Which unperceived consumes us by Degrees.
A little Time the Body acts with Mind;
And these two close Companions are disjoin'd.
How few who dying in the gentler Way,
Drop from the Tree of Life by soft Decay?
The most Death seizes green with ruder Hands,
And violently breaks the vital Bands.
On his Command what dire Diseases wait
To execute the Laws of angry Fate!
Convulsions, Cholics, Ulcers, Gout and Stone,
Fevers and Plagues surround his dreadful Throne;
With ev'ry other painful raging Ill
Which guilty Men, the Sons of Sorrow, feel.
As he directs, our destin'd Paths we tread
To reach the gloomy Regions of the Dead.

Still ſuff'ring, as from this vain World we go,
A ſad Variety of dying Woe.
Ev'n in the midſt of Life we pine and figh;
Not pleas'd to live, and yet afraid to die:
Under th' oppreſſive Load fatigu'd we groan;
And yet how loth to lay our Burthen down.

Are theſe the States of Nature and of Man?
Their Fitneſs ſhow me on thy boaſted Plan.
How theſe agree with God's Perfections ſhow;
From Wiſdom, Juſtice, Goodneſs, how they flow.
* By Fitneſs *Providence*, as Scripture try'd,
Will ne'er the bold and impious Teſt abide.
† Fitneſs whole Pages *there* ſees uninſpir'd;
More perfect Scenes by Fitneſs were requir'd.
To Atheiſm thus from Fitneſs you may fly;
And Him, whoſe Kingdom rules o'er all, deny.

To God's myſterious Providence below,
With awful Heart and Rev'rence ever bow;
And own, not ſeeing, all is right and fit;
What e'er pretends thy vain preſuming Wit;

Content

* The Reader is here deſired to diſtinguiſh that Fitneſs, which ſuppoſes the preſent Appearances of Things to be all according to the *original* Deſign of our Creator, from that Fitneſs of *Permiſſion* or *Appointment*, *conſequential* upon the Abuſe of moral Liberty; the former of which is only oppoſed here.

† This alludes to a certain Writer, who rejects all thoſe Parts of Scripture, as uninſpired, which he cannot reconcile to his favourite Scheme of Fitneſs.

Content to know that God is good and wise;
Tho' theſe Perfections oft in deep Diſguiſe,
Are wrapt in their Effects, from mortal Eyes.
Th' unfolding which, in our ſucceeding State,
Try'd here, and exercis'd, devoutly wait.

Wait too, thy Pride abas'd, aſpiring Man!
To ſee that great evolving wondrous Plan;
By which fair Truth has ſhone with various Ray;
And ſtill ſo partial and confin'd its Day.
Theſe, and whatever Scenes perplex'd appear,
Let the bright Rays of future Glory clear:
Diſplaying to the whole Creation's Sight,
That the great Judge of all the Earth Does right;
From his own Rule of Juſtice never ſwerves;
Nor more inflicts on Man, than Man deſerves.

Own but the Guilt and Miſery of Man;
And then contemplate the Redemption's Plan;
That gracious Plan intended to reſtore
Thoſe great Perfections we enjoy'd before.
Both Man and Nature, from Diſorders free,
Future, revolving happy Years ſhall ſee.

But first ye Nations your Redeemer know;
And to the Brightness of his Rising flow.
Your promis'd great Conversion still remains;
And then triumphant the *Messiah* reigns;
His Reign all Order, Beauty, Peace, and Love;
And purer only heav'nly Joys above.

Ev'n now let Faith but guide and rule our Heart;
What Ills will she surmount, what Joys impart!
From Faith our present Being's Comfort flows;
The Mind's just Vigour, and its sweet Repose.
By Faith serenely pleas'd, and calmly bless'd,
We feel no raging Passions tear our Breast:
Not the least Breath of that tumultous Strife,
Which ruffles and disquiets human Life.
O'er Rocks of Dangers, and thro' Vales of Tears,
She guides with Safety and with Pleasure steers;
Bids all the Glories of eternal Day
Shine on our Souls, and all their Charms display:
Strongly they draw our longing, ravish'd Eyes;
And feast us with the *Prospect* of our Joys.

*THE END.*